

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8147

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 5120

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, IN, SK

SUBJECT: SIKKIM

REF: A) NEW DELHI 5050 NOTAL

B) KATHMANDU 7128 NOTAL

C) HONG KONG 3998 NOTAL

D) STATE 086460 NOTAL

SUMMARY: THE CHIEF MINISTER OF SIKKIM, ARMED WITH AN OVER-
WHELMING MANDATE CALLING BOTH FOR SIKKIM'S FULL INTEGRATION
INTO INDIAN AND THE REMOVAL OF THE CHOGYAL, IS HAVING
MEETINGS WITH MRS. GANDHI AND FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN
APRIL 16. THE OUTCOME OF THESE MEETINGS IS NOT YET KNOWN.
MEANWHILE THE CHOXYAL WHO STIRRED MORE CONTROVERSY WITH HIS
RECENT PRESS CONFERENCE, HAS REMAINED SECLUDED IN HIS PALACE
IN GANGTOK, IN "FINE SPIRITS" AND "GOOD HEALTH" ACCORDING
TO A MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICIAL. DESPITE POSSIBLE
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CHINESE CONCERN ABOUT THE SOVIETS DERIVING ADVANTAGE FROM

THE SIKKIM DEVELOPMENTS, THIS EMBASSY HAS THUS FAR FOUND NO EVIDENCE OF ANY INCREASED INTEREST IN SIKKIM ON THE PART OF SOVIET OFFICIALS HERE. END FGMMARY.

1. OVER SIXTY PERCENT OF THE SIKKIM ELECTORATE REPORTEDLY TURNED OUT APRIL 14 AND GAVE THE KAZI THE OVERWHELMING MANDATE HE SOUGHT BEFORE PROCEEDING TO NEW DELHI TO PRESS HIS CASE FOR FULL STATEHOOD AND THE REMOVAL OF THE CHOGYAL. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, 59,637 SIKKIMESE VOTED FOR AND 1496 VOTED AGAINST THE APRIL 10 SIKKIM ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION WHICH FORMALLY SPELLED OUT THE SIKKIM CONGRESS PARTY DEMANDS. (ABOUT THE SAME 97 PERCENT MARGIN THE CHOGYAL CITES AS THE "POLICE STATE" MAJORITY BY WHICH THE 1974 ELECTION WAS WON BY HIS OPPONENTS.)

2. THE KAZI ARRIVED IN DELHI ABOARD A SPECIAL INDIAN AIR FORCE PLANE APRIL 16 FOR MEETINGS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER. IN AN AIRPORT STATEMENT THE CHIEF MINISTER SAID HE HAD COME TO DELHI FOR "THE FINAL COMPLETION OF AN ACT WHICH SHOULD HAVE OCCURRED IN 1947..." HE MADE CLEAR THAT HE SOUGHT THE GOI'S UNDERSTANDING SO THAT SIKKIM COULD TAKE ITS "RIGHTFUL PLACE WITH THE OTHER STATE GOVERNMENTS IN THE INDIAN UNION." HE SAID THE INSTITUTION OF THE CHOGYAL HAD TO BE ABOLISHED BUT HE DECLINED TO INDICATE WHETHER THE CHOGYAL WOULD BE PERMITTED TO STAY IN SIKKIM. AFTER HIS APRIL 16 MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN THE KAZI TOLD NEWSMEN HE HAD CONVEYED TO CHAVAN THE SIKKIM PEOPLE'S DESIRE TO BE RID OF THE INSTITUTION OF THE CHOGYAL. THE KAZI IS SCHEDULED TO MEET WITH THE PRIME MINISTER IN THE EVENING.

3. THE CHOGYAL'S COMMENTS AT HIS PALACE NEWSCONFERENCE (REFTEL A) HAVE NOT ONLY STIRRED FURTHER CONTROVERSY BUT PROBABLY SERVED TO HARDEN OFFICIAL OPINION HERE AGAINST UNDERTAKING ANY NEW INITIATIVES AIMED AT REACHING A SIKKIM COMPROMISE. THE CHOGYAL'S ADMITTED USE OF A RADIO TRANSMITTER TO COMMUNICATE ABROAD IS SAID BY "OFFICIAL SOURCES" IN DELHI TO BE VIEWED AS AN AFFRONT TO THE 1950 INDO-SIKKIM TREATY WHICH GAVE EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS OF CONTROL OVER COMMUNICATIONS TO INDIA. IT IS SPECULATED IN THE PRESS THAT THE RADIO WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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SMUGGLED INTO SIKKIM BY THE CALCUTTA-BASED SIKKIM TRADING CORPORATION, UNTIL RECENTLY CONTROLLED BY THE CHOGYAL. THE DELHI PRESS HAS ALSO PICKED UP THE STATEMENTS OF THE CHOGYAL'S CLOSE AIDE S.S. RASAILLY WHO CHARGED IN KATHMANDU (WHERE HE MANAGED TO FLEE) THAT THE REFERENDUM WAS HELD AT "GUNPOINT." RASAILLY, WHO CLAIMS TO BE PRESIDENT OF THE "SIKKIM BILL JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE", WAS ALSO QUOTED CALLING ON THE UNITED NATIONS AND MAJOR WORLD POWERS TO STOP INDIA'S

"AGGRESSION AND INJUSTICE" IN SIKKIM. (COMMENT-THE CHOGYAL'S LAWYER, NOW SECLUDED IN THE PALACE WITH THE CHOGYAL, TOLD US SEVERAL WEEKS AGO TYAT RASAILLY WAS "ABSOLUTELY FEARLESS", AND HAD CONSIDERABLE DEROGATORY INFORMATION TO SPILL ON THE KAZI AND HIS AIDES. HIS STATEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES IN KATHMANDU MAY POSE AN EARLY TEST OF THE GON AUTHORITIES' INTENTION TO KEEP SOME CONTROL OF REACTIONS TO THE LATEST SIKKIM DEVELOPMENTS, REFTEL B.) REGARDING THE CHOGYAL'S PERSONAL WELFARE, AN MEA NORTHERN DIVISION OFFICIAL FINALLY RESPONDED TO OUR INQUIRIES LATE APRIL 15 AND REPORTED THAT THE CHOGYAL WAS IN "FINE SPIRITS" AND "GOOD HEALTH" AND UNDER NO RESTRICTIONS WHATSOEVER.

4. COMMENT-WITH RESPECT TO CHINESE CONCERN ABOUT THE SOVIETS DERIVING ADVANTAGE FROM SIKKIM'S ABSORPTION INTO INDIA (REFTEL C) TWO POINTS ARE WORTH NOTING. SINCE THE GOI HAS TRADITIONALLY EXERCISED STRICT CONTROL OVER ITS INNER LINE AND BORDERLAND AREAS, WE DO NOT EXPECT THAT THE SOVIETS WILL HAVE ANY GREATER ACCESS TO SIKKIM OR SENSITIVE AREAS WITHIN SIKKIM AS A RESULT OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL TURMOIL OR SIKKIM'S TOTAL ABSORPTION INTO INDIA. WITH RESPECT TO SOVIET INTEREST IN SIKKIM, WE WOULD ONLY NOTE THAT SOVIET OFFICIALS HERE HAVE NOT TO OUR KNOWLEDGE TRAVELED OR EVEN SOUGHT TO TRAVEL TO OR AROUND SIKKIM IN RECENT YEARS. (THIS IS WHAT THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS HAVE TOLD US IN VARIOUS CONVERSATIONS IN PAST MONTHS). OUR EXCHANGES WITH SOVIETS HERE SUGGEST THAT IN FACT THAT CONDITIONS IN SIKKIM HAVE ATTRACTED NO MORE ATTENTION ON THEIR PART THAN CONDITIONS IN OTHER INDIAN BORDERLANDS, FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE NORTHWEST FRONTIER AREA WHERE THE CHINESE HAVE CONTACTS WITH DISSIDENT ELEMENTS. ALL THE ABOVE IS NOT TO SAY THAT THE SOVIETS MAY NOT MAINTAIN COVERT CONTACTS THERE ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THIS IS SO. OR THAT THEY ARE NOT PLEASED THAT THE GOI HAS PREVENTED A POSSIBLE FUTURE POLITI-
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CAL GAIN BY THE PRC IN SIKKIM BY NOW MOVING TO CLARIFY ITS STATUS ONCE AND FOR ALL. BUT ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION NOW AVAILABLE HERE, WE DO NOT THINK THE SOVIETS HAVE A NOTABLY ACTIVE INTEREST IN SIKKIM, OR FOR THAT MATTER, BHUTAN, AT THIS TIME.

5. ASIDE FROM INQUIRING ABOUT THE CHOGYAL'S PERSONAL WELFARE, WE HAVE FOLLOWED THE GUIDANCE IN STATE 086460, AND HAVE NOT ATTEMPTED TO SEEK OUT ANY GOI OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS DEVELOPMENTS IN SIKKIM.
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